AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (cancelled):

2. (currently amended):   The game machine of claim ~~1~~ 10, wherein the control device sets a plurality of stages in which a plurality of opposing characters which are opponents in a battle are able to appear, causes the player to advance to a next stage after having won over respective opposing characters in a certain stage, and increases the number of cards available in a battle.

3. (currently amended):   The game machine of claim ~~1~~ 10, wherein the control device sets a plurality of stages in which a plurality of opposing characters which are opponents in a battle are able to appear, and increases the number of cards available in a battle when the player has won over the opposing characters at least a predetermined number of times in a certain stage.

4. (currently amended):   The game machine of claim ~~1~~ 10, wherein the control device enables loading of, on a per-unit-card-information-set basis, a plurality of card information sets pertaining to a plurality of cards recorded on a computer readable medium, thereby enabling the player to increase the number of cards available in a battle.

5. (original):   The game machine of claim 4, wherein the control device sets a read enable flag for a card information set for which loading has been permitted.

6. (original):   The game machine of claim 4, wherein the plurality of card information sets are set so as to differ from each other.

7. (original):   The game machine of claim 5, wherein the plurality of card information sets are set so as to differ from each other.

8. (original):   The game machine of claim 4, wherein the computer readable medium includes an external computer readable medium removably attached to the game machine, and a setting region for the read enable flag is formed on the external computer readable medium.

9. (original):   The game machine of claim 5, wherein the computer readable medium includes an external computer readable medium removably attached to the game machine, and a setting region for the read enable flag is formed on the external computer readable medium.

10. (currently amended):   ~~The game machine of claim 1~~ A game machine which enables a player and an opponent to play a battle by laying down their cards in a game screen, the game machine comprising:

a control device which increases the number of cards available in a battle when the player continues winning,

wherein the control device updates time information pertaining to the world of a game every time the player plays a battle with an opposing character, and

wherein the control device effects contents of an event when requirements for occurrence of an event are satisfied if the updated time corresponds to a predetermined date and time at which an event is to arise.

11. (original):   The game machine of claim 10, wherein the control device causes the player to acquire a new card available in a battle when the player has won over an opposing character, when the player's winning over an opposing character is defined as a requirement for occurrence of an event.

12. (cancelled):

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13. (currently amended): ~~The method of claim 12~~A method of controlling operation of a game machine which enables a player and an opponent to play a battle by laying down their cards, the method comprising the steps of:

setting a plurality of stages in which a plurality of opposing characters which are opponents in a battle are able to appear; and

causing the player to proceed to the next stage when having won over the opposing characters in a certain stage, thereby increasing the number of cards available in a battle,

further comprising the steps of:

updating time information pertaining to the world of a game every time the player plays a battle with an opposing character; and

effecting details of an event when requirements for occurrence of an event have been satisfied if the updated date and time corresponds to a predetermined date and time at which a certain event is to arise.

14. (cancelled):

15. (currently amended): ~~The method of claim 14~~ A method of controlling operation of a game machine which enables a player and an opponent to play a battle by laying down their cards, the method comprising the steps of:

setting a plurality of stages in which a plurality of opposing characters which are opponents in a battle are able to appear; and

increasing the number of card available in a battle when the player has won over the opposing characters at least a predetermined number of times in a certain stage, and further comprising the steps of:

updating time information pertaining to the world of a game every time the player plays a battle with an opposing character; and

effecting details of an event when requirements for occurrence of an event have been satisfied if the updated date and time corresponds to a predetermined date and time at which a certain event is to arise.

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16. (cancelled):

17. (currently amended):   The computer readable medium of claim ~~16~~ 19, wherein the processing routine includes:

setting a plurality of stages in which a plurality of opposing characters which are opponents in a battle are able to appear, and

causing the player to proceed to the next stage when having won over the opposing characters in a certain stage, thereby increasing the number of cards available in a battle.

18. (currently amended):   The computer readable medium of claim ~~16~~ 19 wherein the processing routine includes:

setting a plurality of stages in which a plurality of opposing characters which are opponents in a battle are able to appear, and

increasing the number of cards available in a battle when the player has won over the opposing characters at least a predetermined number of times in a certain stage.

19. (currently amended):   ~~The computer readable medium of claim 16~~ A computer readable medium having recorded thereon an operation control program for controlling operation of a game machine which enables a player and an opponent to play a battle by laying down their cards, the operation control program comprising:

a processing routine for increasing the number of cards available in a battle when the player continues winning, and

wherein the processing routine includes:

updating time information pertaining to the world of a game every time the player plays a battle with an opposing character, and

effecting details of an event when requirements for occurrence of an event have been satisfied if the updated date and time corresponds to a predetermined date and time at which a certain event is to arise.

20. (previously presented):   A game machine, comprising:

a display, which displays a game enabling a player and an opponent to play a battle by laying down their cards;

an exchangeable storage, in which a plurality of card information groups are stored in advance, each of card information groups being associated with one of a plurality of stages in the game, and including:

a plurality of card information items; and

a flag, having a first state which disables reading out of associated one of the card information groups from the storage, and a second state which enables the reading out;

a random access memory, and

a controller, which places the flag in one of the card information groups, which is associated with one of the plural stages that the player has cleared, in the second state, and loads the one of the card information groups that the flag has been placed in the state to the random access memory.

21. (previously presented) A game machine, comprising:

a display, which displays a game enabling a player and an opponent to play a battle by laying down their cards;

an exchangeable storage, in which a plurality of card information groups are stored in advance, each of the card information groups being associated with one of a plurality of stages in the game, and including:

a plurality of card information items; and

a flag, having a first state which disables reading out of associated one of the card information groups from the storage, and a second state which enables the reading out;

a random access memory; and

a controller, which places, in the second state, the flag in one of the card information groups, which is associated with one of the stages when the player wins over at least one opponent character present in the one of the stages a predetermined number of times, and loads the one of the card information groups that the flag has been placed in the second state of the random access memory.